

Let's Sleep On It – Part Two

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Too often we design training in four-hour and eight-hour chunks because we feel those are “worthwhile” periods of time to take people off the job for training purposes. Often, however, the amount of information that is transmitted in four-hours or eight-hours is more than a typical learner can take in and put in to practice. A best practice for training design is to design content in small topical chunks of two to two-and-a-half hours, with a period of a few days in between each delivery. This allows the participants to “sleep on it” and assimilate the information more readily.

For instance, a typical new customer service representative training course, which encompasses eight-hours, would include how to use the phone system: accepting calls from the queue, transferring them when necessary, categorizing the nature of the call and disposing of them appropriately – all using the hardware. Those same topics would also be taught from the perspective of handling the call: taking in the customer's information, determining if it's a call that you can handle or if it should be escalated, providing the correct information to the caller, and bringing the call to a close / resolving the issues. Those same topics *again* would be taught from the perspective of the computer interface that needs to be used: what fields need to be completed, how do you categorize the nature of the call so that it can be tracked in the company statistics, how do you appropriate phrase and write your notes as a CSR so that future CSR's will sufficiently understand what you have done to help the customer should the issue not be resolved on the first call, etc. That's a *lot* of information to take in on one day.

It's not hard to imagine that a customer service representative will then get on the job and have forgotten 50% or more of what they learned. How do they take a call from the queue? What questions do they ask to determine if the call needs to be escalated? What fields need to be completed in the system so that the call can be closed out and the next call accepted?

While it will be longer to teach these concepts in smaller chunks; i.e. telephone system on day one, computer system on another day, and scripts on the third day, the likelihood of retention is much higher when participants have the opportunity to pause and reflect on what they've learned.